# WASHAKIE'S GRIEF

## UPON LEARNING OF THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS A MEMORABLE SCENE.

### David B. Weaver Writes of a Subject Interesting to Park County Old Timers—Yellowstone City in 1864.

From Livingston, Mont. Enterprise, May, 1904.

Congressman J. M. Dixon has forwarded to the Enterprise a letter he recently received from David B Weaver, of Saxton, Pa. The letter has considerable local interest and perhaps there are still living in Park county men who can recall the occasion of Chief Washakie's visit to the Yellowstone valley and his camp near Yellowstone City, now Chico Springs As Mr. Weaver suggests, "Washakie Learning of the Death of Lincoln" would make a fine subject for the best efforts of some Montana artist, and possibly some of them may take it up. Mr. Weaver s letter to Congressman Dixon is as follows:

"Saxton, Bedford county Pa., April 19. Hon. Joseph M. Dixon, Dear Sir:—I address a few lines to you to say that some 40 years ago in company with four others I left this place for the gold mines of Idaho, but before getting there, congress by an act divided the territory forming the Territory of Montana. Arriving in the latter territory in the month of August, 1864, near where the city of Livingston is now located Here our party divided, some going on to Virginia City. Myself and an old Colorado prospector, D. R. Sh[illegible], continued on up the Yellowstone river to what is known as Emigrant gulch to the place now known as Chico. From there we proceeded several miles up in the mountains east of Emigrant Peak. Here we found the first gold in paying quantities that was discovered in the Yellowstone country. This was on August 30, 1864. On the 12th of September following we adopted mining laws and also organized the Shorthill district. I was deputy recorder and still have those old mining laws. The first territory legislature was elected in the following October, 1864. During the autumn of 1864 Washakie, the head chief of the Shoshone Indians, with the hunters of his tribe, went down into the buffalo country on the Big Horn river. In the early part of May they returned, coming up the Yellowstone valley on the west side of the river to opposite Yellowstone City, now called Chico. Leaving his lodges or wigwams on the west side, Washakie crossed over the river to Yellowstone City. Now I enclose a photo of this well known chief. I met him at that town and my companion, Richard Owens, noticing the large silver medal suspended around his neck, took it in his hand. Seeing on one side the two hands of friendship and on the other side the bust of President Lincoln, Mr Owens told Washakie that the great chief (Lincoln) was dead, (gone to his long sleep). Washakie turned to another chief and asked if it was true The chief spoken to replied that it was, with a nod of the head at the same time. Washakie stood silent for several moments over the sad news.

"Now my object in writing to you is to learn if you could interest the people of your State in having some artist make a fine oil painting of 'Washakie Learning of the Death of Lincoln.'

"The scene which I have related took place 39 years ago Washakie died several years ago, but there are photos of this chief in Washington. Owens is also dead but some of his family, I feel sure, have his photo. With Emigrant Peak for a background looming up over ten thousand feet such a picture would make one of the grandest and most fascinating views that an artist could dwell upon; combining the early history of your State with the closing of the Civil war. * *

"I hope you can interest some of your artists in this subject and I will assist cheerfully all I can."

---

To the above I would say that this historical painting would show the log cabins built in the town named "Yellowstone City" This place was the first white settlement made in the Yellowstone valley, and was the frontier settlement of Eastern Montana for some years.

The people of the New England States point with historic pride to Plymouth Rock as the landing place of the Pilgrims from the "Mayflower" on the coast of Massachusetts. Now the people of the great Yellowstone valley can point to Emigrant Peak, as their Plymouth Rock, at whose base the wearied pioneers landed after a journey of 1300 miles and after spending four months on and crossing the plains. Here we landed and tried to "conquer the wilderness" and wrest from nature the hidden golden treasures in the Yellowstone or Snowy mountains.

The hosts of tourists that will visit the Yellowstone National Park for centuries to come in passing up the valley from Livingston to the Park will see the towering peak now known as Emigrant Peak rearing its lofty height over ten thousand feet above the sea as the "land-mark" of our first settlement, made in 1864. Time is fast passing away and if we wish to leave to future generations events and scenes of pioneer days it will have to be done soon. At this writing I know of only two men who "blazed the trails" to the placer mines in the gulches of Montana. One is Henry Edgar, who was one of the discoverers of Alder gulch in 1863, and the writer of this, the last survivor of the discoverers of gold in paying quantities in Emigrant gulch, in 1864. Possibly there may be others yet living of whom I am not aware.

If my strength and health holds out, I expect to visit this locality on the Yellowstone, and if arrangements can be made for an artist or painter to meet me at Livingston and go with me to where Washakie stood—not "upon the burning deck" in that sad scene—where he learned the sad tidings of Lincoln's death. In conclusion would say that my time will be gratuitously donated that this painting above noted may be for the present as well as the future generations to see.

D. B. WEAVER,

Last survivor of the men who discovered gold in the Yellowstone valley.

February, 1911.